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ABSTRACT

Facts can be objectively gathered, but they are devoid of significance until they are related, contemplated, and unified in the mind of a creative person. Facts lead to ideas, and ideas combine with tacit knowledge and skill lead to knowledge which is a steppingstone to wisdom. An academic's task is to find, define, and refine ideas. Books provide an important dimension in learning, but good teaching demands variety. Those who would help students gain knowledge must themselves possess a great deal of knowledge that students can use. Professors must open their students' high-order thinking skills and stimulate students' divergent thoughts; skillful teachers will help students seek significant problems and connect them with useful facts. Although the solving of problems is the task of a craftsman, the defining of problems previously undiscovered and then the solving of these problems is the calling of the master or leader. The problems chosen, and the way the problems are framed determine what facts are needed and how the facts are used. Prospective top school leader candidates should be carefully selected and imbued with a sense of joy for their responsibilities, for administrators need almost infinite wisdom to meld the diversities, adversities, and desires of many people and transform their workplace into a place of happiness and learning. (16 references) (KM)

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IF ALL I NEEDED WERE FACTS, I'D JUST BUY YOUR BOOK: THE EXPANDING EQUATION OF LEADERSHIP PREPARATION*

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IF ALL I NEEDED WERE FACTS, I'D JUST BUY YOUR BOOK:
THE EXPANDING EQUATION OF LEADERSHIP PREPARATION*

Introduction

The designing, conducting and monitoring of educational experiences for the citizens of a democracy is a noble calling. This monumental task cannot be achieved by mediocre people. Outstanding people must desire to become school administrators and professors of education administration. Schools must be fine places to work. If a person can't find joy as a school administrator or have fun in the preparation of school administrators, if learning and running places for learning are not joyous experiences, assuredly we can expect none but disciples of the Marquis de Sade to live and work willingly in such dismal environments. This discussion sketches out some ideas describing ideal elements of professors of education administration and preparation programs for education's administrators. It doesn't go far enough. It is a start.

Facts and books are important. Facts in books are especially important because they have stood the test of time and they endure where we can examine them thoroughly and at our leisure. Thus, the title in no way suggests that facts and books are not important. Facts and books are valuable, but they are not enough. For those who understand something of the "great professors" in the field of education administration, a couple questions may direct our thinking about the intent of the title.

Why was an internship with Walter Cocking important to those 13 who had the experience? Utermohlen (1987) interviewed those interns and provided insights and answers to this question. What separated those "great professors" of education administration from the many who were mediocre? Why would someone go, for example, to Berkeley to work with Edgar Morphet, or Chicago to study with Roald Campbell, or New York to study with Dan Griffiths, or to Tennessee to work with Orin Graff? What was the attraction? After all, these people wrote. The eager student could just have bought their books.

To say that the answer is "charisma" would be simplistic. Certainly there was charisma. But there must have been more.

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*This is an edited version of a lecture presented to the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) on 8/14/1987 by C.M. Achilles, Professor, Educational Leadership, College of Education, U. of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-3400. The talk sets forth some ideas about the preparation of men and women to lead America's schools. Perhaps others will agree with parts of this point of view and share it with colleagues.

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A Book's Place in Fact

Facts are important. Facts are necessary in education, but they are not sufficient. Alfred North Whitehead (1929:16) spoke to this issue: "Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge." Facts are only part of knowledge, and knowledge is only a stepping stone to wisdom.

Facts are a reservoir. After they well up behind the dam and mix with other facts, they may spring forth in a current of exciting ideas. An inert fact is useless, but when those carefully collected and stored facts overflow, and run forth in a spate of ideas they become elusive but fresh and refreshing and much to be sought after. Whitehead (1929:13) also addressed this issue: "Education with inert ideas is not only useless, it is...harmful." Facts combining with other facts may produce ideas. Facts plus ideas make up much of knowledge, but not all of it. To be valued, knowledge must be useful and used. Knowledge must act. (Later we'll speak of acting appropriately). Hear the Lebanese Poet, Kahlil Gibran...

> A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle. (Gibran:63).

A book contains valued facts which can add ideas to the knowledge equation. It is a thrill to have an idea, whether an old idea, a new idea, or just an idea whose time has come. Sometimes we realize that someone else had this idea previously and we feel briefly let down. But the thrill of having an idea keeps seeking new ideas. So, our equation begins:

FACTS --> IDEAS = KNOWLEDGE (--> = Leading to)

A student's viewpoint is certainly important. Let's hear in a student's own words how the student might feel about books and teachers. Young eyes offer new vistas.

A Student's Parable: The Book, Student, and Teacher

Your book, which I have bought, is a good teacher of facts. The book may lead me to do independent thinking. Maybe your book, through exposition and I, through rote, form a learning arrangement. Yet, my education needs more. The possibility of rewards and the delight gained through dialogue and discussion impel me to test my uncultivated, meandering and untrammelled thoughts against your marshalled facts. Perhaps the combination of your facts and my thoughts will provide a fresh idea, an idea for both of us. Your facts will be the starting place, but for those facts really to be important and useful, you, as teacher must challenge and encourage me to test, extend and apply them.

Your book has offered me the background, the deep pool of facts from which our idea has sprung. Your sharp questions and engaging conversations about the facts will open the flood gates to allow a gusher of ideas through.

With the professor at my side, lending support and prestige, I feel spirited to take the facts, thoughts and ideas and seek their useful applications. I can do that, because as the professor you have thought and

written about this issue; your peers have afforded you respect for analyzing this topic, and my questioning of your facts does not threaten you. By working with you I share in your prestige and now I will dare to challenge a problem with my idea which sprung from your reservoir of facts. We'll have fun with our facts and ideas.

If all I needed were facts, I'd just buy your book. I need more. I need help in learning--and learning is more than just facts. I need to grapple with facts, apply facts, extend facts. Learning is more than facts.

> Learning is the only wealth tyrants cannot despoil. Only death can dim the lamp of knowledge that is within you. The true wealth of a nation lies not in its gold or silver but in its learning, wisdom, and in the uprightness of its sons. (Gibran:61).

Professors and Books are Both Important--Professors More So

An academic's task, it seems, is to find, define, and refine ideas. Thus, scholars would ask us to add some academic rigor to the prior assertions. There are several ways to do this.

One way is to describe a philosophic rationale for the idea. Another is to build a theoretic framework around this concept. We might combine several ideas into a construct which we could describe, define and test. Or, because we are dealing with a fresh idea, we might just present it for discussion, discourse/ dialogue, thought and refinement; later we may constrain it with philosophy and theory. Perhaps metaphors will embellish the idea.

If you had a critical heart problem and could choose where to have major heart surgery, you would certainly choose a prestigious hospital where a renowned heart surgeon practiced. You would choose well, for your life depends on your choice. Why seek out specific heart surgeons? It shouldn't be necessary. Many heart surgeons have read about heart surgery; many have attended lectures. If all a great surgeon needed were facts, you would have lots of choices; many have read the book. Why not just choose one of them? (Crist and Achilles, 1987).

You would go to where a great heart surgeon held forth, even knowing that this surgeon would not do the entire surgery alone. But you know that the surgeon will be there to guide an assistant through the surgery. The surgeon will be there, and would take charge if something should happen that weren't in the book.

In a thoughtful small volume entitled Tacit Knowledge, Michael Polanyi (1966) explained that each of us knows more than we can tell. Why are there so few great chefs when there are so many fine cookbooks? So few great artists when there are so many fine art books? Written information may be good, but it is not enough. Those who have read a good book are a step beyond those who have not; those who have read the book and have also practiced under the mentorship of the author are yet another step beyond those who have only read. Why? The former may know what to do; the latter will know what to do and also have a "feel" for their tasks. The facts may

explain what to do, but facts by themselves do not explain how to get jobs done. The pupil needs facts, but the student wants also to know how to get the job done--well. Our growing equation takes a slightly different form now.

FACTS --> IDEAS + TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL = KNOWLEDGE (--> = Leading to)

As teachers, we would be delinquent if we did not consider that people learn in different ways. One student learns by reading; another needs to observe and discuss something before learning it well. The professor's book most assuredly will help one far more than the other. Books provide one important dimension in learning, but good teaching demands variety. If for no other reason than that we wish to be good teachers, we understand that the book only goes so far.

We should add to our construct the notion of domains of learning. The book may thoroughly address needs of the cognitive domain. Should students leave our programs with only a cognitive orientation to the profession of school administration? No! A thorough program will address each student's affective domain. How will a book do these tasks? The student wants more than facts, so the student has come to study at our institutions. The equation grows again.

FACTS --> IDEAS + TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL + AFFECT = KNOWLEDGE

There is more. The student wants not only to learn "what" to do from reading our books and "how" best to do it from working along with us, but while developing into a competent professional that student would like to explore--with our guidance--the very important "why" questions. These "why" questions form the philosophy that undergirds what professionals should do. Certainly new administrators should not be left to deal with those questions alone. Within the big "why" questions lurk philosophy, ethics and values. Assuredly, you would not turn students out into a profession as important as education administration without some confidence in their philosophy and ethics. Nor should our students wish any less. If all they needed were facts, they would just buy our books. But they need more, so they come to our institutions to study, and they have come there to study with us.

Administration is a profession of application: professors should profess the best information from basic disciplines and help students understand the best ways to apply this information. In an "applications" profession, key questions must still be raised. These basic questions illuminate the basic philosophy, values and ethics: "Why should we apply this particular technology or procedure?" "How should it be applied?" "Who should control it?" "What good will it provide?" etc. Dialogue will refine these questions which deal with the essences of education. Books present facts or ideas and seldom engage in active dialogue.

Whitehead (1948:73) said, "There is not a sentence which adequately states its own meaning. There is always a background of presuppositions which defies analysis by reason of its infinitude."

Whitehead's ideas closely parallel Polayni's concept of "tacit knowing." Even scientists seldom have clear knowledge of all their suppositions, and if they try to formulate these, they often are quite unconvincing. Tacit and personal knowledge is always present, and often exceeds the powers of articulation into exact symbols of language. Total objectivity is probably only a delusion; the process of knowing involves both the knower and the object of knowledge. The knower is an active seeker. Facts can be gathered objectively and mechanically but they are devoid of meaning and significance until related, contemplated, and unified in the mind of a creative person. Facts are not knowledge by themselves. (Malik, 1977: paraphrased). The equation continues to grow, but now it begins to grow uncertain:

FACTS --> IDEAS + TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL + AFFECT + PHILOSOPHY = <u>?????</u>

Even knowledge, a level above facts, is insufficient. A love of knowledge, philosophy, integrates facts into useful thoughts. Whitehead (1929) and others identify the desideratum of wisdom as the end of education.

> What I am anxious to impress on you is that though knowledge is one chief aim of intellectual education, there is another ingredient, vaguer but greater, and more dominating in its importance. The ancients called it "wisdom." You cannot be wise without some basis of knowledge; but you may easily acquire knowledge and remain bare of wisdom.
>
> Now wisdom is the way in which knowledge is held. It concerns the handling of knowledge... This mastery of knowledge, which is wisdom, is the most intimate freedom obtainable. The ancients saw clearly... the necessity for dominating knowledge by wisdom (p. 41).
>
> and
>
> The importance of knowledge lies in its uses, in our active mastery of it--that is to say, it lies in wisdom (p. 43).

Herman Hesse summarizes this idea in <u>Siddhartha</u> (1951:144): "Wisdom is not communicable. The wisdom which a wise man tries to communicate always sounds foolish... Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, be fortified by it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it." The transmission of <u>facts</u> is one thing. Education to understand and use facts properly embodies more. Education aims not merely to produce well informed people, but to lead those people to quality life and high ideals.

Administration deals with people. Administrators are people. One reward of work is enjoyment, and schools should be enjoyable. This idea leads to a challenge. <u>Every one of us should transform our workplaces into places of joyous learning</u>. For only if we radiate joy and delight in our work can we expect those whom we educate to become infected with the fun of administration, of learning and of administering joyful places of learning (Davies, 1987).

Books have facts and ideas. But learning is living. Each of us must breathe a breath of life into the experience of preparing for a life of learning. As professors we mentor our protegees and proteges.

Students can learn facts, data and details with little guidance. Knowledge is transmissible, but those who would help students gain knowledge must themselves possess knowledge which the students can use. This may be the easy part, for we must also show our students to the path of wisdom that they must travel to transcend mediocrity and become exceptional administrators of outstanding schools.

The problems we seek out and identify to solve are more important than the mere solving of routine problems. The solving of problems provided to us is reactive; the defining and solving of problems we have found and framed is proactive. The one is the task of the servant or craftsman, the other the calling of the master or leader. The problems we choose and the ways we frame those problems determine what facts we need and how we will use the facts. The books have the facts. Skillful teachers will help students seek significant problems and connect them with useful facts. Those who would guide students to the facts must have prodigious breadth of knowledge. Wisdom will help our students ask the right questions. Those of us who would guide students toward wisdom need the wisdom to guide them on that journey.

Cartoonists often depict a bright idea by showing a lightbulb above the person having the idea. Knowledge is from the Latin root word noscere which means to learn. What we have learned becomes our knowledge. There are lots of ways to learn, there are diverse learning styles, and there are different rates of learning. Skilled teachers steer students through the thickets of learning. Wisdom is something more. It shares the same root word with wit and derives from the Latin, videre, which means to see. Back to our cartoonist. A wise person, a person who has wisdom, is one who has seen the light (the light is more than the lightbulb). A wise person has used much knowledge to illuminate the pathway to wisdom. This individual act of synthesis and valuation is not easy.

If all that our students needed were facts and knowledge, they would just buy our books. If schools only need administrators who have facts and knowledge, leaders could assess prospective administrators with pencil and paper tests over the prescribed set of facts and knowledge. But facts are not enough, nor ideas, nor knowledge; it takes wisdom, almost infinite wisdom, to meld the diversities, adversities, and desire of many people into a place of joy and learning. Our equation is now much longer, and it diverges.

KNOWLEDGE (FACTS + IDEAS + TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL + AFFECT) +
PHILOSOPHY + JOY + INTUITION + ABILITY TO ACT APPROPRIATELY --> WISDOM

Often in considering change, we look to the young for fresh ideas and enthusiasm. This may be true. Today, we need changes in the way we prepare education's leaders. We need vigor and experience. We should turn not only to the young, but also seek counsel of the mature for in this great change we need both knowledge and wisdom; we need fresh views and the security to try something new. We need bastions of security and fledgling idealism to find and test productive new ways of preparing administrators for schools likely to be very different from those we know today. Demographics tell us that times will change. (Robert Frost's "What Fifty Said" and A.E. Houseman's "When I Was One and Twenty" express, in juxtaposition, the dilemma we face.) Whitehead said the same thing.

> The tragedy...is that those who are imaginative have but slight experience, and those who are experienced have feeble imaginations. Fools act on imagination without knowledge; pedants act on knowledge without imagination. The task of the university is to weld together imagination and experience (Whitehead, 1929:98).

Facts, by themselves, are not enough. Leadership includes the complementarity of rational and intuitive thinking styles. Norris (1984) has noted the dramatically left-hemisphere, or rational/linear, style of school leaders. This definite cognitive style, easily handled in books, is far different from the holistic and intuitive style of top executives in other fields (Coulson and Strickland, 1984). Fact-oriented, linear-thinking managers will be skilled in making routine decisions. Given sufficient time, facts and figures, along with the simplistic approach to problems which they usually take, they will be successful decision-makers based on analyses of hard data in relation to past experiences and the accumulated knowledge of how things operated before. (<u>If all I needed were facts, I'd just buy your book</u>)! The danger of this approach is that managers will stick with the status quo; they will seek <u>refinements</u> of present conditions rather than creating fresh scenarios and opportunities. Their unimaginative metaphors will not be generative. For them:

> Education chugs along like a slow freight train mostly composed of old baggage cars. A change often is but another car of old baggage added to the end; an exciting, innovative change may be a vista-dome car. Both only serve to lengthen and slow the already tired, plodding leviathan. Plans for the future continue to ride the rails of the past" (Norris and Achilles).

The "reforms" suggested by the many commissions of the 1980's prove this metaphor: more subjects, more days, longer days--more of the same that got us into trouble to start with. (If we can't have new vehicles, at least let's provide superengineers and superconductors for the ones we have!)

Professors must be more than book dispensers. Somehow they must open up their students' high-order thinking skills. Students need opportunities and guidance in applying knowledge--in analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. We must stimulate our students' divergent thinking. Where are our new metaphors, our new ideas, our new models? Where, for example, is a true education model, not one jury-rigged from the medical model, the business model, the science model, the hospital model, the prison model? It is not enough to add a baggage car, or even to speed up the train. Our institutions must accept the challenge of imagination.

Thus the proper function of a university is the imaginative acquisition of knowledge. Apart from this importance of the imagination, there is no reason why...professional men should not pick up their facts bit by bit as they want them for particular occasions. A University is imaginative or it is nothing--at least nothing useful. (Whitehead, 1929:101).

Most of us know that we need changes in our schools and in our preparation programs. Do those of us who envision exciting changes and ways to assess them have the fortitude to build new models? Many of us have the tools and techniques necessary to design evaluation procedures to help us substantiate or repudiate the value of the changes. How many of us evaluate not just our students, but our programs and ourselves? How many of us seek interesting programs to study and evaluate? A new approach is refreshing to find. A new approach rejuvenates our teaching and our examples. Think what benefits a guided observation of this new approach can provide for our students.

For example, how many teach the benefits of site-based management? How many have actually seen it work? Have spoken to an administrator involved? Have studied it? Guthrie (1986) identifies these elements: principal as chief executive officer, school advisory councils, school-site budgeting and accountability, annual planning and performance reports. Books have the facts on site-based management; where will our students get the "feel" for it?

Many have access to journals. Whether the results of our work are positive or negative, we need to tell others about our new attempts. We need to exchange ideas as we move toward better preparation programs. We need to heed a medical tradition and be stingy on dispensing information that undermines our field as a profession. But first we must be professional and work from the inside to put our own house in order.

What, then, must we have besides our books and facts? We must have the knowledge, patience, skills, and wisdom of great teachers. We must have vision, intuition and a bit of daring. We must have top-quality students with whom to share the enjoyment of learning; we must recruit vigorously, select judiciously and support those whom we select with sufficient funds while we encourage them to be exceptional.

What else can we do? We can make our programs exciting places to be. We can be exciting. We can become connoisseurs of schools and the leadership of schools (Achilles, 1977). We need: 1) to develop strong, logical positions on key issues (morally and ethically, not just legally); 2) to honor quality over quantity and avoid the "Gallup Poll" mentality; 3) to imbue carefully selected top candidates for school leadership with a sense of joy for their responsibilities. What book will do these things?

Now back to the earlier questions. What made the internship with Walter Cocking so special? Was it the internship? Was it Walter Cocking? Undoubtedly it was the interplay of Walter Cocking and the internship.

Why would a student travel far to certain universities to study with the excellent professors? The student could read their books. Wouldn't that be enough? No. The student only starts there, with the facts and the books. Eager students thirst for more. Those honored professors, and others like them whom we have all met, shared, extended and debated the ideas and the philosophy which their books and other writings set out for analysis. It is a happy meeting: the joining of someone who has ideas and something to say and the wisdom to share and discuss those ideas with someone willing to accept those ideas and who has the vision to question and challenge them, and the intuition to extend them. Where are those people in our field today? Each of us <u>can</u> be part of this interesting and expanding equation. Will we?

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*Although all of these works are not cited in the text, each contributed to the flow of ideas presented here. All theme articles of the Winter, 1987 National Forum provided thoughts for this article.